

FROM THE

COMMITTEE

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, Plaza 1-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, May 3...An 11-point program by which members of the American Jewish Committee -- and presumably all Americans -- can help to implement the recommendations of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders was announced today in the bi-monthly Newsletter of the AJC.

"More and more citizens are realizing," an editorial in the April-May issue of the Newsletter, out today, stated, "that only a huge, concerted attack on the ghetto crisis -- as blue-printed by the Commission -- will permanently restore safety to our city streets without destroying our civil liberties or tearing the nation apart."

The AJC editorial summarized short-range projects in the many areas suggested by the Kerner Commission, along with an indication in each of how AJC members could participate:

1. ORGANIZING FOR COMMUNITY ACTION. Get a citywide conference to pinpoint combustible spots set up in your city -- through the local Urban Coalition, if there is one. Invite government officials; social agencies; religious, business, fraternal and labor groups. Help with gathering any facts needed for planning action.

2. CREATING JOBS. Cooperate with the National Alliance of Businessmen, which has set out to create 100,000 jobs for hard-core unemployed, plus 200,000 for youth this summer. Urge AJC members who are employers to confer with the Alliance's local director; tell him how many jobs you can offer.

3. NEGRO BUSINESSES. Help Negro-owned businesses get off the ground: through professional advice, aid in getting loans, purchases. Use Negro suppliers and contractors; urge others to do so. Volunteer as a consultant through the Interracial Council for Business Opportunity

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or the Small Business Administration.

4. FREEDING MOTHERS TO WORK. Many Negro women could hold jobs if they had someone to take care of their children. Find out how your city is supplied with day care centers. Assist in setting up centers where needed.

5. NEGROES AND THE MEDIA. Conferences of press, radio and TV people and minority groups have been held or will be held in many cities. Organize such a meeting in your city, to promote responsible reporting of Negro affairs and wider employment of Negroes in the media.

6. COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE GHETTO. The feeling of most ghetto dwellers that local government is not listening to them can be explosive. Urge your city officials to organize neighborhood councils or task forces that will carry the word from and to ghetto residents, and will help them obtain needed services promptly.

7. RECREATION NEEDS. In several cities, AJC is talking with Jewish federations or other Jewish organizations about giving or leasing unused land they own in or near ghettos to Negro groups for recreation. See if such sites exist in your city; if so, help make them available. Also seek commitments from Jewish and other groups to provide places for ghetto youngsters in camps and on sponsored trips.

8. GOVERNMENT. Through your AJC chapter, set up machinery to keep yourself and others informed of pending legislations, and of the need and prospects of supplementary Federal appropriations for job training, youth service, education.

9. LAW AND ORDER. Encourage interest in storefront police stations, youth auxiliary police patrols, Negro officers in high positions. Work for gun registration laws to keep weapons from snipers and trigger-happy vigilantes. Help promote the widely noted new handbook issued by AJC, "The Police on the Urban Frontier," by George Edwards.

Two additional points, not directly involving areas covered by the Kerner Commission, dealt with the aftermath of riots:

10. AID TO RIOT VICTIMS. Find out if your city is geared for such aid in case it becomes necessary. If not, help organize it -- along interracial, interreligious lines.

11. RIOT-STUCK BUSINESSES. Through your business connections, help small businessmen who are riot victims to get loans to reopen or move. Support state legislation for pooling ghetto insurance risks.

The editorial summarized American Jewish Committee activities since the Kerner Commission report was first made public February 29;

* Four regional meetings to mobilize local action were held in Dallas, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles early in April, with 235 AJC leaders from more than 50 cities attending;

* A special meeting of the AJC's policy-making Board of Governors April 3 heard Senator Fred R. Harris, Oklahoma Democrat who was a member of the Commission, first urge that the Commission be reconvened, a plea embodied in a letter earlier this week by Bertram H. Gold, AJC Executive Director, to Gov. Otto Kerner of Illinois, Commission chairman;

* 27 national organizations, spearheaded by the AJC and the Anti-Defamation League, joined early in April in publishing reprints of the summary of the Commission's report, and already 300,000 copies have been sold;

* Several AJC chapters are setting up task forces that will meet weekly to assign duties and review progress, with reports due at the AJC's 62d Annual Meeting, to be held May 23-26 at the Americana Hotel, in New York.

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